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(71) Applicants

Perifleur Products

Limited,

Hangleton Lane, Ferring,

Worthing, Sussex

(72) Inventor

Alec Graham Sparkes

(74) Agents

Marks and Clerk,

57—60 Lincoln's Inn

Fields, London WC2A 3LS

(54) Nets

(57) A net for protecting growing crops has at least one surface thereof provided with a metallised, e.g. aluminised, reflective coating. A

method of protecting growing crops against insect attack comprises placing such a net over the growing crops with the metallised reflective surface facing outwardly with respect to the growing crops.

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SPECIFICATION
Nets

This invention is concerned with improvements in and relating to nets for protecting growing 5 crops.

The use of nets to protect growing crops against various pests is, of course, very well known.

It has now been found, in accordance with the 10 present invention, that the effectiveness of a net for protecting growing crops against insect attack may be improved by providing the net with at least one metallised reflective surface.

Accordingly, one embodiment of the present 15 invention provides a net for protecting growing crops, at least one surface of which net is provided with a metallised reflective coating.

The invention also provides a method of 20 protecting growing crops against insect attack by placing over the growing crops a net having at least one surface provided with a metallised reflective coating, the said surface being outwardly facing with regard to the growing crops.

Nets in accordance with the invention may be 25 prepared by metallising a preformed net. Such metallisation may be carried out, for example, by vacuum deposition of a metal (typically aluminium) onto a surface of the net followed, if desired, by a transparent protective coating. The 30 net may, of course, also be metallised on both surfaces. Alternatively the net may be formed (i.e. may be woven or knitted from) a metallised thread or filament.

In either case the basic material of the net is 35 preferably a plastics material, suitably a polyamide such as Nylon 66.

In addition to providing an enhanced insect 40 protecting effect, metallisation of the net also

serves to increase the in use life of the net by 45 protecting the base material of the net from the effects of weathering and sunlight.

The mesh size of the net should, of course, be such that the holes in the net are generally small enough to prevent ingress of the insects against 50 which the crops are to be protected. Thus, for example, the mesh size may vary from, say, 0.5 mm in order to protect crops from small insects such as leaf miner pests to 5 mm to protect the crops from larger insects.

55 It is believed that the effect of metallising the net is such as to deter insects from settling on or even approaching the nets and thus reduces the possibility of insects penetrating or evading the nets through gaps or possible tears in the nets.

55 Whilst the metallised nets may be placed directly on the growing crops it is generally more convenient to support them on appropriate frames above the growing crops. Alternatively, where the growing crops are grown in glass houses, the nets 60 may be supported and spread across the houses at a level intermediate to the roof and floor of the house.

CLAIMS

1. A net for protecting growing crops, at least 65 one surface of which is provided with a metallised reflective coating.
2. A net as claimed in claim 1 having a mesh size of from 0.5 to 5 mm.
3. A net as claimed in claim 1 substantially as 70 hereinbefore described.
4. A method of protecting growing crops against insect attack by placing over the growing crops a net as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, the metallised reflective surface being 75 outwardly facing with regard to the growing crops.